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## Excelsior Hose-House.

The present excellence of our fire system has led the public to regard the companies with pride. No entertainments are so well patronized as those organized for the advancement of fire interests. The recent completion of a house for the use of Active Hose Company at Watsessing marks an epoch in the history of this enterprising suburb. Its situation is well chosen and its appointments liberal.

Following out the design for the establishment of Hose Companies in the suburbs to supplement the work of the Truck and Hose Company at the Centre, the Excelsior Hose Company was lately organized for the protection of the district north of the Montclair and the Pequannock Lake Railway.

This district is large in extent, embracing an area more than one-third of the township; and having water pipes upon Broad street as far north as Mr. Henry Lindemeyer's residence, with a branch in Morris Place. Much valuable property is here protected by the water supply furnished.

In addition to the large manufacturers of Messrs. Thos. Oakes & Co., the Essex Paper Company, the paste-board mill of Mr. E. H. Davey and the Combination Roll and Rubber Company, there is much private property invested in dwellings, barns and business places.

All this property is entitled to such protection against fire as present facilities afford. It is therefore of importance in seeking permanent quarters for the new company, to have them centrally situated for the use of this district. To this purpose personal preferences should by no means be a determining factor. Nor should the liberality of present patrons be too greatly considered. It is to be remembered that any scheme must receive the approval of the Township Committee; and that fire companies must prove themselves useful in order to obtain support from the public treasury.

Another matter is to be regarded. The upper district has no adequate polling-place.

A small room centrally situated, which can be divided by a railing, and without seats except for the use of the polling officers, is much better adapted for the purpose than one in the nature of a school-house or church. The two other districts use their fire-houses for polling-places, and the same course would doubtless be followed with this, if properly situated.

It remains then to determine the proper location.

To be of use in a district north of the Greenwood Lake Railway, a situation on Broad street, half-way between this point and the terminus of the water-pipes would seem to be centrally located, and to answer all necessary requirements.

Such a point may be found at or near the intersection of James and Broad streets. From this point the mills of Messrs. Thos. Oakes & Co. and E. H. Davey can be conveniently reached by crossing the canal, reaching the manufactories by a back way; while the Paper and Rubber mills are conveniently near. The thickly settled areas of Morris Place, Broad, Osborn and Canal streets can be quickly reached. As a polling-place it would be available, and by its presence would help to stimulate interest in the neighborhood.

Lots can here be obtained at much lower rates and will prove less objectionable to people in the neighborhood than those nearer the railroad.

Situated here the fire service may fairly be regarded as a useful adjunct to the companies at the Centre. Located further down it must soon lose the support of people who cannot regard it of any use beyond that supplied by the other companies.

We present these points with no desire to dictate to those in charge of this important matter, but that a wise decision may be reached by thorough discussion and a full understanding of the needs of the people.

## Temperance Sermons in the First Presbyterian Church.

The Rev. Mr. Ballantine, pastor of the First Presbyterian church, having preached recently on Drunkenness a Sin, was requested to continue the subject so far as to answer the question, What can and should be done to remove it? This request he complied with last Sunday morning. The sermon was without a text; but through its course the Scripture passages bearing on the several parts of the subject were brought out.

After remarking on the complexity and delicacy of the question for the pulpit, especially as a full answer to it requires one to go beyond the explicit teachings of the Bible, though not beyond its principles, and citing the precedent set by the Apostle Paul in answering similar questions, to "give judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful," he proceeded substantially as follows:

1. Christians can pray for help from heaven. "Deliver us from evil."

2. With respect to one's own personal danger of falling into this sin, the course of safety, in our circumstances, is manifestly *Total Abstinence*. One must watch against the beginnings of the drinking habit, for once formed, it drifts a man beyond the danger line before he is aware, just as the undertow insensibly drags a surfbather out beyond his footing. As there are many safe beaches to bathe on, so there is a plentiful variety of safe stimulating drinks supplied in the laboratory of nature, leaving one without excuse for using those that are unsafe.

If any part of our New Jersey coast was as fatal to bathers as rum-drinking is to those who practice it, laws would be quickly enacted and the shores patrolled, if necessary, to prevent persons exposing themselves to the danger.

We may discover what the true common sense of the people is, on this subject, by observing their judgments in the case of others, especially the case of those they love most. Whatever a man may claim to think is good and safe for the people at large, including himself, is there any father who would not prefer to hear about an absent son, that he is a total abstainer, rather than learn that he has commenced the habit of moderate drinking?

3. What can we do to restrain drunkenness in others?

The teachings of Holy Scripture require us to "deliver those that are carried away unto death, and to see that we hold back those that are ready to be slain" (Proverbs 24: 11). We must therefore use all the influence we possess to restrain others from that intemperance that leads to death, and cannot discharge ourselves from the obligation by asking with Cain, Am I my brothers keeper?

With reference to drunkenness in others,

1. The Scriptures make it, first of all, the duty of the church to treat it as a sin. In 1. Corinthians 5: 11 one reads, "But now I write unto you not to keep company if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator or covetous, or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner; with such a one, not to eat . . . Put away the wicked man from among yourselves. The church must testify against this sin by voice and discipline.

Resolutions of the Presbyterian General Assembly were here cited, indicating the church's recognition of this duty, in part, as follows: "That we call upon the sessions of our churches to guard carefully the purity of the church, by refusing to admit to membership, or to retain those within her pale, who are engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or who derive their livelihood from this sinful traffic."

"That every member of Christ's church should be constrained neither to touch, taste, nor handle the intoxicating cup, which has evil and only evil in it; as seen in its influence upon politics, society, homes, hearts, lives, destroying men in this life and rendering them hopeless for the life to come."

2. Christians may and should use moral suasion to its utmost to hold others back from wrong doing.

3. They may establish such counter attractions as circumstances allow to keep young men away from the saloons.

So far doubtless all here present are agreed, but do these embrace the whole of our duty in this case? If we are to use all the influence we possess against this evil we cannot stop short of bringing this also.

4. Our political influence.

We may keep this, if we choose, disengaged from other political questions—and this would certainly seem to be most wise—but it is idle to talk of keeping the matter "out of politics." Political influence can be exerted only on the political arena. It is in politics already: it influences votes, and only by counter votes can we meet them.

Here comes up the delicate question, What political attitude Christian Temperance men should take? There are no plain directions in the Scriptures, hence the great diversity of opinion.

One familiar proposal is a sweeping prohibition, excluding from the country, by law, all trade in, or manufacture or possession of, that which causes so much evil.

But this can probably never be successfully achieved. History shows that while Prohibition has worked in some cases, on a small scale and for a brief time, it has never been possible to maintain it on a large scale and for a long time. This is because it assails men's sense of their manhood. We may agree to forbid the introduction of intoxicating liquors upon our Indian reservations, treating the Indians as wards, unable to care intelligently for themselves; but if drink is to be kept from our whole country on the same ground, who are the self-appointed guardians that undertake to look after our conduct?

There ought to come a time when men should be able to be treated as men: and if that time be not arrived in America, in our oldest States, where and when may it be looked for in the world? But even if some are of opinion that it would be better if we also were the under strong government of a few wiser and better than the masses of the people are such is not the case. In the providence of God the real sovereign in our country is the majority and its will, such as it is, legally expressed and declared, it is the duty of all to respect. No one may justifiably try to defeat it or circumvent it, as by the use of a political "balance of power." A man's political responsibility to God is his own vote honestly cast and defended.

It is however seriously questionable whether National or State Prohibition is desirable, even if it could be carried by a vote of majority. Laws secure respect and obedience only where they rest on the sense of right in a community. But our nation is not a community. Our State is not a community. A community is not an abstract conception of the people within certain designated boundaries; but is a very concrete reality: it is a true organic growth and consists of people that think and feel alike, that mutually recognize themselves to have interests in common. A State or Nation embraces many communities, every one of which is swayed by what it conceives to be its own interests. It is impossible at present to bring our country districts and our crowded cities to think and act together on these liquor-traffic questions. Prohibitory laws, even if duly enacted by a majority, will be resisted in the cities as the oppressive impositions of a foreign authority. The instinct of Home Rule is against them. Even God does not work upon the plan of making it physically impossible for people to sin. In the last resort it is better to let all men bear their proper share of responsibility.

In our smallest municipal sub-divisions, where by common feeling and common interests the people can act together, the hurtful liquor-traffic may be restrained without antagonizing the equal liberty of other people. Others will readily concede us this right and we ought to be willing to concede the same to them, and are certainly not under Christian obligation to try to deprive them of it.

The sermon closed with calling attention to some things the friends of Temperance ought not to do. We ought not to erect into a sin, that which God in his Word has not made so, as, for example, the temperate drinking of wine. We may say it is dangerous, if we think it so, in our present circumstances; but it is beyond our ability to make that sinful which He has not made sinful.

Further, we ought not to give way to passion and denounce as criminal all those who do not think and vote as we have decided to vote. An offense committed recently by a temperance convention in our own county, which resolved that "all men who vote for parties which license, or for parties which will not declare for Prohibition, (where there is a Prohibition party) do make themselves accessory to the liquor crime, and equally guilty with the man that carries on the traffic."

In James 4: 11, 12, we read, "Speak not one against another brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth a brother, speaketh against the law and judgeth the law; but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law but a judge."

"One only is the lawgiver and judge, even He who is able to save and destroy; but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?" And again we read "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

That every member of Christ's church should feel constrained neither to touch, taste, nor handle the intoxicating cup, which has evil and only evil in it; as seen in its influence upon politics, society, homes, hearts, lives, destroying men in this life and rendering them hopeless for the life to come."

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